

Claims

- [c1] 1.A hardware card for insertion into a television tuning device having electronic program guide capability comprising:
a case having a form factor; and,
a non-volatile memory situated within the case and having data stored thereon that enable the television tuning device to access one or more electronic program guides from one or more corresponding electronic program guide providers.
- [c2] 2.The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the data represents one or more loader programs for the television tuning device, each loader program corresponding to an electronic program guide provider.
- [c3] 3.The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program comprises a decoder segment to decode encoded electronic program guide information from the electronic program guide provider to which the loader program corresponds.
- [c4] 4.The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes specification of a transmission network over which encoded electronic program guide information is received from the electronic program guide provider to which the loader program corresponds.
- [c5] 5.The hardware card of claim 4, wherein the transmission network comprises at least one of: a dial-up modem, Ethernet, in-band, out-of-band, vertical-blanking interrupt (VBI).
- [c6] 6.The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a database segment to transfer the loader program into the television tuning device.
- [c7] 7.The hardware card of claim 2, wherein each loader program includes a segment to provide a user interface.
- [c8] 8.The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the data represents non-executable

information decodable by the television tuning device to access electronic program guide information from an electronic program guide provider.

- [c9] 9.The hardware card of claim 8, wherein the non-executable information is decodable by a decoder segment of the television tuning device.
- [c10] 10.The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the non-volatile memory comprises flash memory.
- [c11] 11.The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the television tuning device comprises a set-top box.
- [c12] 12.The hardware card of claim 1, wherein the form factor comprises one of: a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.
- [c13] 13.A television tuning device comprising:
an outer case;
a slot within the outer case to accept a hardware card having a form factor to provide the device with capability to receive electronic program guide information from an electronic program guide provider over a specified network; and,
one or more connections within the outer case to communicatively couple the device to a display.
- [c14] 14.The device of claim 13, wherein the form factor comprises one of: a Smart Card form factor, a Compact Flash form factor, and a Smart Media form factor.
- [c15] 15.The device of claim 13, wherein the hardware card has a non-volatile memory on which non-executable information is stored that is decodable by a decoder segment of the television tuning device, the non-executable information, when decoded by the decoder segment, providing the device with the capability to receive the electronic program guide information.
- [c16] 16.The device of claim 13, wherein the hardware card has a non-volatile

memory on which a loader program is stored that corresponds to the electronic program guide provider, the loader program providing the device with the capability to receive the electronic program guide information.

[c17]

17.A method comprising:
inserting a hardware card into a slot of a television tuning device
communicatively coupled to a display; and,
accessing data stored on the hardware card to enable the device to receive
electronic program guide information from an electronic program guide
provider over a specified network.

[c18]

18.The method of claim 17, wherein accessing the data stored on the
hardware card includes loading a loader program from the hardware card
into the television tuning device, the loader program corresponding to the
electronic program guide provider and enabling the device to receive the
electronic program guide information.

[c19]

19.The method of claim 17, wherein accessing the data stored on the
hardware card includes decoding non-executable information from the
hardware card to enable the device to receive the electronic program guide
information.

[c20]

20.The method of claim 17, further comprising removing the hardware card
from the slot of the television tuning device.

[c21]

21.A method of doing business comprising:
offering a consumer one or more electronic program guide hardware cards
for purchase, the cards able to be inserted into a corresponding slot of a
television tuning device used by the consumer, each card enabling the
television tuning device to access different electronic program guide
information;
purchasing by the consumer of an electronic program guide hardware card;
and,
loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television

tuning device.

- [c22] 22.The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by the consumer.
- [c23] 23.The method of claim 21, wherein loading the electronic program guide hardware card into the television tuning device is performed by a merchant.
- [c24] 24.The method of claim 21, further initially comprising receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer.
- [c25] 25.The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes purchasing of the television tuning device by the consumer.
- [c26] 26.The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes providing of the television tuning device by a merchant to the consumer free-of-charge to the consumer.
- [c27] 27.The method of claim 24, wherein receiving of the television tuning device by the consumer includes receiving by the consumer of an electronic program guide hardware card along with the television tuning device.
- [c28] 28.The method of claim 24, further comprising accessing a provider server by the television tuning device to receive the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card inserted into the television tuning device.
- [c29] 29.The method of claim 24, further comprising, as part of the purchasing by the consumer of the electronic program guide hardware card, registering the hardware card with a provider server to indicate the different electronic program guide information associated with the electronic program guide hardware card.